NComputing®

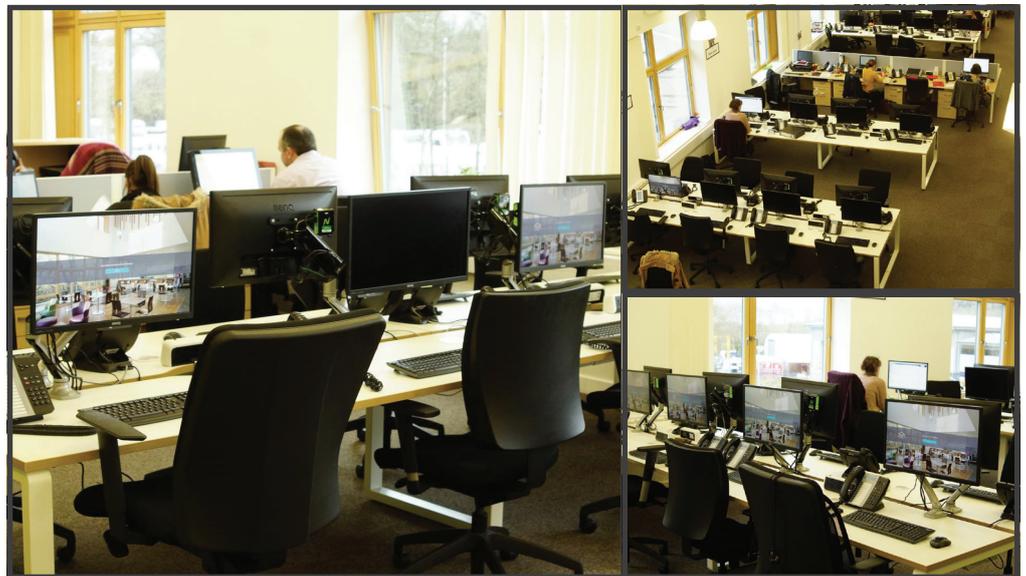# Thin client solution transforms housing association headquarters

The RX-HDX solution transforms housing association headquarters into a flexible, efficient environment that meets the demands of an increasingly mobile workforce, as well as delivering significant cost and space savings.

"NComputing's RX-HDX devices cost a third of what we projected if we were to install a new network of laptops in our Mamhilad headquarters. It also slashes our utility bills through reduced operating expenditure, delivering significant savings and reducing our carbon footprint."

Dewi Parry
Monmouthshire Housing Association
IS Support Office

Monmouthshire Housing Association provides, manages and maintains around 3,600 affordable homes and 270 leasehold properties across the county, mainly for people on low incomes.

Many of its 180 employees are housing officers and work directly with tenants (e.g. carrying out inspections and assessing housing needs). They are highly mobile and constantly moving between the office and the community. Many even work remotely, an upward trend in today's business world.

"This way of working requires a flexible, efficient office with hot desking facilities, but our headquarters in Mamhilad was not fit for purpose," explains Monmouthshire Housing Association IS Support Officer Dewi Parry. "There was a 'desk ownership' culture that felt dated and the desks themselves were too big, utilising the space poorly and failing to accommodate our growing team. Plus, many of our computers were ageing and slow to boot or operate, it was time for an upgrade."

The association decluttered and renovated its headquarters, installing a modern hot desking system that increased the building's capacity from 48 employee workstations to 70 in the same floor space. Dewi and his team then turned their attention to the IT equipment.

 "Instead of purchasing lots of expensive new laptops or PCs, we opted for 45 compact RX-HDX Citrix Ready Workspace Hubs from *NComputing*," continued Dewi. "Mounted behind workstation monitors, they allow users to access a single set of applications running on three high-powered Citrix servers, rather than operating as standalone units. Each user receives their own dedicated virtual workspace, which resembles a Windows desktop and provides a seamless PC experience."

The benefits

The Citrix Ready Workspace Hub (RX-HDX) by *NComputing* is unique. It is comprised of a credit card-sized Raspberry Pi computer, originally developed to help children learn to programme in schools, combined with sophisticated management software called NoTouch. This allows it to connect and integrate seamlessly with Citrix servers.

Monmouthshire Housing Association

Monmouthshire Housing Association uses Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops to deliver finance control and housing management systems to key areas of the business, enabling mobility and reducing cost. Finding the right endpoint was an essential component of the project's success.

The RX-HDX is smaller, less expensive and uses less power than any other thin client on the market by some distance. This meant they were highly attractive to the housing association's management team.

Dewi explains: "*NComputing*'s RX-HDX devices cost a third of what we projected if we were to install a new network of laptops in our Mamhilad headquarters. It also slashes our utility bills through reduced operating expenditure, delivering significant savings and reducing our carbon footprint. Their compact size and quiet running makes for a tidy, productive workplace, and the culture change we are experiencing by transitioning to a hot desking environment is extremely positive."

NComputing's RX-HDX can be centrally managed using NoTouch Center. This means the association can easily control the setup and configuration of the devices and apply software or firmware updates from a central location, instead of endlessly repeating the same process on individual machines. This drastically reduces the IT team's workload, freeing them up to focus on core business activities.

The RX-HDX is compact but powerful and features built-in WiFi, Bluetooth and NFC which enable the casting and roaming features. It supports dual screen usage and is optimised for Skype for Business. As an added bonus for Monmouthshire Housing Association, the units happened to match its corporate colours.

"We are extremely impressed with *NComputing*'s RX-HDX thin client solution, so much so that we plan to roll it out to our other offices and possibly even employees' homes for remote working," added Dewi. "It has made a massive difference to the smooth and efficient running of our headquarters and brings our culture up to date. The devices facilitate effortless hot desking, and feedback from employees has been extremely positive."

Support and safeguarding

After looking at open source alternatives, Monmouthshire Housing Association partnered with Genisys Group to deliver *NComputing*'s enterprise level solution. "The commercial, fully supported RX-HDX product is far more reliable than something pieced together using open source software," explains Genisys Group Account Director, Stewart Constantine. "In addition to supplying and installing the units, we were also able to offer Monmouthshire Housing Association complete peace of mind with a range of management, support and safeguarding services."

Following a short test, Monmouthshire Housing Association purchased 45 RX-HDX devices and contracted Genisys Group to install them. This shortly expanded to 70 devices following the initial success of the rollout.

"Stewart and his team provided a diligent and efficient service from initial consultation through to installation," commented Dewi. "Once Genisys Group arrived with the hardware we were up and running in just a couple of days. *NComputing*'s RX-HDX devices and Genisys' accompanying services, allowed us to deliver the project much more swiftly and cost effectively than we would have been able to, using an open source solution. As with all new technology implementations, there were a few minor technical issues that we needed to work through, but *NComputing*'s pre-sales service was excellent and we're now looking for ways to roll these devices out across the organisation."

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For more information visit:

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